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ABSTRACT

This discussion is organized into four sections. In an introductory section, it is pointed out that the word "decentralization" appears to have many meanings. There is a need to clarify definitions, and to examine decentralization in a practical, working context. In Part 1, "Background and Issues", some of the major issues involved in decentralization are outlined, and the way this concept grew in popularity with the history of urban unrest during the 1960's is shown. In Part 2, the decentralization experiments of six major urban school districts--Saint Louis, Missouri; Los Angeles, California; Washington, D.C.; Detroit, Michigan; New York City; and Louisville, Kentucky--are discussed in detail. In Part 3, "Decentralization in San Francisco", the history of attempts to decentralize the San Francisco Unified School District is reviewed, and some of the factors supporting or preventing decentralization in San Francisco are analyzed. An overall summary of interviews with community representatives and members of the Board of Education involved in voting on proposals to formally decentralize the school district is given. Also included are sources of information on and brief descriptions of decentralization structures in five cities not discussed in the text. (Author/JM)

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URBAN SCHOOL DECENTRALIZATION

A Study By

The San Francisco Service Center
for Public Education

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INTRODUCTION

During the last decade American public education has been under severe attack throughout the nation. Nowhere has this criticism been stronger than in large urban school districts. During the past ten years, declining academic achievement, antiquated facilities and inaccessible bureaucracies have led many citizens to demand increased participation in decision-making for their children's education. Many people feel that until this is accomplished, no effective change can endure at the classroom level.

One solution repeatedly offered in cities across the country has been "decentralization" of the school district. However, the word "decentralization" seems to have as many meanings as the people who use it. The resulting confusion indicates a need to clarify definitions, and to examine decentralization in a practical, working context. To accomplish this, we will try to outline some of the major issues involved in decentralization, and show how this concept grew in popularity with the history of urban unrest during the 1960's. We will then discuss in detail the decentralization experiments of six major urban school districts.

Finally, we will review the history of attempts to decentralize the San Francisco Unified School District, and will analyze some of the factors supporting or preventing decentralization in San Francisco. We hope that familiarity with the design, the successes, and the problems of previous decentralization efforts will help those districts currently embarking on this major structural change. Of course, the lessons learned from these cities must be applied to the unique local characteristics of any district interested in beginning decentralization.

Because decentralization involves basic issues of power and control of educational institutions, conflict among the participants is inevitable. In considering a reform as major and comprehensive as decentralization, concerned citizens might seriously consider the following remarks of Mario Fantini, a veteran of many years of the New York City decentralization battles and a strong community control advocate:

> "The problem...is not with any group, whether administrators, supervisors, teachers, students, parents, or community residents. The problem is with the form and the shape of the institution in which the parties function; it is with the institutional environment and its effects on the parties' interest. In short, the problem is with the 'system', not the people."

PART I: BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

Definitions of School Decentralization

In discussing and writing about decentralization, people use many terms that are seldom clearly defined. Consequently, it is often unclear what is meant by "community control" or "decentralization" or "community participation". Clarification of these terms can begin by distinguishing between "administrative decentralization" and "political decentralization".

Administrative Decentralization

"Administrative decentralization" usually involves delegation of some responsibility and decision-making away from a central authority to school officials in sub-units of the district. Often, these "sub-units" are geographical areas of the city. Some administrative staff personnel are sent by the central authority to a local office in that area. It is important to note, however, that though the degree of administrative decentralization may vary among cities, the focus of political power under administrative decentralization remains with a single central administration and one city-wide Board of Education.

Political Decentralization: A New Role for Citizens

In "political decentralization", local units of a school district assume not only administrative but also legislative power. The authority for setting policy and making some decisions becomes a local, rather than a strictly central function. Usually political decentralization includes the formation of an elected group representing the community served by the schools. It is important to remember that in this structure, power is delegated from the central authority to local policy-making boards. Complete decentralization in fact would result in breaking up school districts into smaller, legally-constituted, tax-levying agencies.

Clearly the role of the citizen differs considerably in these two types of decentralization. In "administrative decentralization" some form of increased community participation may be encouraged by the school district. Usually this takes the form of advisory committees which make recommendations to local administrators and serve as liaisons between the

schools and the community. However, under administrative decentralization final decision-making authority in the local area rests with the professional educators assigned there. Final policy formation power for the entire district remains with the central Board of Education. Thus, only those citizens serving on the city Board of Education have any real authority to make decisions; all other "community participation" is limited to an advisory capacity.

"Political decentralization", however, is based upon a new role for the citizen in determining educational policy. When a school district decentralizes in this way, legal provisions are made to establish local school boards in geographical areas of the city. A city-wide central Board of Education is retained, and guidelines are drawn up to provide for the power relationship between it and the local boards. The number of boards varies among cities, but in each case citizens — rather than school authorities — serve on them.

The notion that final authority for educational decisions must rest with local citizens is what is usually meant by the term "community control". Though the definitions and the origins of community control differ greatly, the basic belief underlying them is that the citizens of a community should have the power and the authority to make major decisions in running their schools.

History of the School Decentralization Issue

The move to decentralize urban school bureaucracies must be viewed in the broader context of political developments during the 1960's. Though the cultural and political dynamics of each city were unique, several general patterns were emerging throughout American education. In the first place a changing student population presented a new set of demands on the traditional urban educational system. The new student needs were first indicated by a rapid decline in academic achievement. As achievement levels continued to decline, parents began to demand change in educational policy. However, they often found it impossible to reach and influence school officials hidden behind bureaucratic red tape. As a result, community groups grew more insistent in challenging their lack of access to the policy making process in public education.

In addition, many parents, particularly minority group parents, grew frustrated with lagging efforts at school integration. Tired of this lack of advancement during the late 60's, many community leaders turned their efforts from desegregation to the problem of obtaining decision-making

power for themselves. Parents throughout the country differed on the degree of community control they advocated, but the demands for greater community participation and more local decision-making grew universal. The decentralization issue arose in city after city, often locally initiated.

The origins of demands for decentralization were based principally on four major assumptions: (1) that shared power is good; (2) that decision-making close to the issues is good; (3) that people want to participate in decisions that affect their lives; and (4) that decentralization will permit more people to participate in educational decision-making than will other forms of school governance.

PART II: MAJOR DECENTRALIZATION EXPERIMENTS

Most cities which have attempted decentralization have limited their efforts to administrative decentralization. Usually this involves dividing the district into areas, each headed by an area (or "district" or "regional") superintendent. Community advisory boards are sometimes, but not always, established either at the site or the area level. (The administrative decentralization of St. Louis and Los Angeles is described in detail below. Following this, we describe experiments in political decentralization in Washington, D.C., Detroit, New York City, and Louisville, Kentucky.) We will not argue for any model of decentralization, nor have we attempted to evaluate the results to date. Instead, we hope that our descriptions of different operating models will encourage new possibilities for planned and effective decentralization in the future.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The issue of school decentralization in St. Louis must be studied in light of particular characteristics both of the district and of its history of citizen involvement. By 1970, 44% of the population of the city was Black. More importantly, Black children comprised two-thirds of the city's total school enrollment. Additionally, nearly 70% of these children came from poverty areas. Unlike many cities, however, half the principals, teachers and district superintendents of the St. Louis schools were also Black. On the other hand, the downtown central office administrators and the members of the Board of Education were predominantly influential whites, reflecting a long tradition of upper class control of school policy.

Any chronicle of decentralization in St. Louis must note the key role of the Citizens' Committee for Quality Education. Formed in the early 60's by a reform movement of white civic leaders, the Committee has gradually gained complete control over the Board of Education elections. Though the white political leadership has now added Black members to its electoral slates, the same Citizens' Committee has controlled every seat of the 12-member Board for nearly a decade.

History of Administrative Decentralization

Only administrative decentralization has been attempted in St. Louis. Though the role of local citizens has been expanded, it has been limited to an advisory capacity. In 1953, St. Louis began decentralization by sending the directors of the elementary program out to field offices. In 1962 these

directors were named assistant superintendents and were given greater administrative responsibility over their districts. Between 1966 and 1969 each high school and its feeder elementary schools was placed under a single district administrator and his four-person field staff. Centralized departments of personnel, maintenance and curriculum served these field units. At that time each district contained approximately 17,000 students.

Citizen Involvement

To increase local citizen involvement, the St. Louis school system established parent congresses as early as 1960. Though each district's parent congress was to meet monthly with its regional superintendent, no formal power was ever delegated to these assemblies. The functional relationship between parents and staff varied, usually depending upon how the administrator himself defined his role. Most chose not to strengthen the role of the parent congress, and over the years the parent congresses rarely pressed for policy change.

By 1969, however, the mood among parents and community groups had shifted radically throughout the city. Citizens were demanding a greater voice in school decision-making. A conference of over eight hundred community representatives recommended to the Board of Education that it decentralize politically through the establishment of six separate local boards. The results of this large conference were clear: local citizens wanted community control of their schools. The school district, however, responded by continuing a policy of limited administrative decentralization and by accelerating its own program of citizen participation. It is important to note that all community involvement remained advisory in nature; demands for political decentralization were rejected by the school districts.

Administrative Decentralization Plan

St. Louis decentralized its administrative services in 1969 by creating five local districts, each made up of two "administrative units". Each of these units contained one high school with its feeder elementary schools. Each two-unit district was headed by a district superintendent. The district superintendent's responsibilities included preparing a budget, controlling all expenditures, supervising curriculum development, evaluating personnel, and generally coordinating all district programs with city-wide educational policy.

In the area of citizen participation, each of the then administrative units had its own parent congress. Though the number of these congresses was increased in 1969 from six to ten, the school district granted them no real power or authority. By the 1970-71 school year, St. Louis parents had expressed their dissatisfaction with this situation by refusing public school tax levies, and by decreasing their participation in the parent congresses.

The Decentralization Issue

Throughout the last decade, the issue of school decentralization did not raise serious or prolonged debate in St. Louis. There seem to be several major reasons why the citizen demands for community control were dissipated. In the first place, the school system itself adopted a changing, gradualist policy of citizen participation and administrative decentralization. Additionally, school politics was generally dominated by a small group of upper class reformers that controlled membership on the Board of Education. The Citizens' Committee for Quality Education's support of the District's symbolic efforts at decentralization has severely curtailed any demands for community control.

Finally, the movement for community control of schools usually requires a center of political opposition to the established school powers or a major issue around which to organize. In St. Louis the lack of strong community-based educational organizations has been a factor in keeping efforts toward community control erratic and poorly organized. In sum, St. Louis represents a school district which responded to citizen complaints by expanding its program of administrative decentralization and by maintaining a gradualist policy of limited citizen involvement in decision-making.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

For several reasons decentralization has always been a natural issue in Los Angeles. The nation's second largest district serves more than 800,000 students and operates more than 620 schools in an area of 710 square miles. This geographical area contains 69 separate communities.

School decentralization has in some ways been unavoidable due to the size and the diversity of the Los Angeles Unified School District. On the other hand, the threat of the system breaking into its component parts has remained equally strong. This would result in unequal taxing and probably in a system of unequal educational services to the children of Los Angeles.

Parent Groups and Decentralization

In Los Angeles, as in other cities, a strong interest in the education of inner-city children developed during the early 1960's. Citizen participation in schools began through the federal government's involvement in low-income areas and, specifically, by its formation of ESEA Title 1 advisory committees. Title 1 became a training ground for parents not previously involved in educational decision-making.

As minority community parents grew more active, so did their frustrations with the schools. In response to demands for further citizen participation, the school district set up a series of minority group commissions — the Black Educational Commission, the Mexican-American Educational Commission, and the Asian-American Educational Commission — to articulate community viewpoints to the Board of Education.

During this same time, taxpayer and parent groups in the white community claimed they too were excluded from educational policy-making and deserved greater participation in their local schools. Many white parents felt that too much attention and money were being spent on the needs of minority students. If the district were decentralized, they argued, their children's education could be more properly influenced by parents at the local site level.

The combined effect of this citizen pressure was a push for decentralization from both kinds of groups — from those seeking massive educational reform and from those promoting traditional education and low taxes. In both cases, parent groups did not focus on any one plan of reorganizing the District. Instead, their concern was to increase citizen participation through decentralization.

The School District Decentralization

By 1968, the District was forced to consider system-wide decentralization due to increased pressure from citizens and legislators alike. In fact, State legislation was enacted to begin decentralization in Los Angeles. Responding to demands for increased participation, the Board of Education ordered the formation of a School-Community Advisory Council at each school site (Board Rule 1370, 1970). These councils were to be groups of at least 11 persons, including 51% elected parents, 1 faculty representative, 1 representative from classifed employees, and 1 student (in high school councils only). The principal was to act as an ex-officio non-voting member of the council.

The central Board made it very clear that no school-community council had final power or responsibility for decision-making. Instead, their limits were clearly outlined; the councils "shall participate in decision-making by advising the principal in matters pertaining to the local school and its educational program...The term 'advising' is intended to mean (1) inquiring, (2) informing, (3) suggesting, (4) recommending, (5) evaluating." The Board affirmed that by law the principal remained ultimately responsible for administering and supervising the school. Beyond this point of clarification, the Board left the nature, scope and character of citizen participation up to each individual school. Both flexibility and ambiguity resulted.

District Referendum

In 1970, the Los Angeles School District established an Office of Decentralization Planning. As a result of widespread demands for citizen participation in the decentralization process itself, the Office began a massive referendum campaign. Designed to collect community and staff ideas about the next stages of decentralization, the referendum involved mailing over 700,000 questionnaires to community residents. Though critics claimed the school district could only gain broad indications of public sentiment by this form of communication, the overall effect was to build a feeling of mutual cooperation between the district and the parents.

Partially in response to the referendum, the Board of Education created 12 administrative areas, each headed by a local superintendent (July 1, 1971). Four field service centers were staffed with instructional specialists and consultants to provide support services to local administrators and teachers. Though the Board maintained the structure of the School-Community Advisory Councils, it ignored increased demands for greater local control of policy — demands expressed primarily in minority communities where educational activists were skeptical of a decentralization plan that was administrative only.

Task Force Report

In May, 1972, a district Decentralization Task Force reported its assessment of Los Angeles decentralization to that date. Its findings, a summary of extensive interviews with both citizens and staff, point up interesting strengths and weaknesses. Those interviewed generally felt that

the District had benefited from the reorganization. Decentralization had provided, in the views of many, an increased flexibility in curriculum and budget, a source of local leadership in the person of the area superintendent, and a tangible communication vehicle through the advisory councils.

The weaknesses noted by participants focused upon the continuing problems of implementing a decentralization plan with ambiguous or little definition of roles. Those interviewed asked that the district clarify the specific nature of decentralization to the public.

Parents noted additional weaknesses in the structure of the School-Community Advisory Councils themselves. Participants expressed a need for an explicit definition of their role — particularly with respect to the scope of the councils' functions. Additional resources, such as training for council members, better communication and information from the central administration, and operating funds were also needed.

The Future

In the future, the Los Angeles Unified School District will probably continue to be the target for two opposing forces in school decentralization. On the one hand, the drive toward a broadened participation on the part of citizens will push the District toward a greater decentralization of decision-making power. On the other hand, the growing militancy of public employees and the fiscal crisis in education both require a strong central education agency to negotiate and tax city-wide.

In California, the State Supreme Court ruled in the case of **Serrano v. Priest** that the current system of school finance is unconstitutional. As proposals for new state aid formulas or a state-wide or metropolitan-wide property tax are being discussed, large districts feel a pressure to maintain a broad tax base and a strong central administration. As these complex issues evolve, however, it is clear that the nature and structure of educational policy-making will remain under debate throughout the 1970's. Considering its history and the problems which remain, Los Angeles will undoubtedly remain a focal point for the debate over decentralization.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The history of school decentralization in Washington, D.C. can be viewed as an example of national trends in school reform during the 1960's. Specifically, efforts toward integrating the school system evolved into a later effort to decentralize. When the earlier goal of integration seemed increasingly remote, educational activists, particularly those in the Black community, turned their attention to community control.

In considering any local institution in Washington, one must keep in mind several factors which make the city's political climate unique. First, the obvious presence of the federal government and its direct role in local government has, in many ways, stunted the development of strong local leadership. Secondly, by the year 1967 the school enrollment in Washington, D.C. was 92% Black, and thus effective desegregation seemed pointless to many parents. As they watched achievement levels decrease, Washington parents, like those in other cities, demanded more control over policy and programs in an effort to change this pattern in their local schools.

The Anacostia Experiment

Although the school district did not embark on a major, system-wide effort to decentralize, the federal government instituted one important experiment in community control. In 1967, responding to President Johnson's wish for a demonstration project in urban education located in Washington, the Office of Education chose the Anacostia District. This district, serving 13,000 students, contains eight elementary schools and three secondary schools.

The two main goals of the Anacostia project were improved reading levels and increased community participation through the creation of local policy-making boards. These efforts were generally conducted by the Office of Education, with both the D.C. school district and the community itself in minor roles. In retrospect, the project was a good example of the problems involved in federal demonstration programs operating at the neighborhood level. Most of all, the Anacostia District suffered from a lack of consistent attention by the federal government. Because the role of the Office of Education was never sharply defined, the project grew dependent upon federal leadership and found it difficult to function independently. By the school year 1971-72, though local policy boards had been initiated, participation in board elections was low and the boards themselves were growing less active.

The Anacostia Project was terminated in 1972, but it has clarified some major issues in experimenting with political decentralization. In the first place, many participants felt that the goals were too great for the time, personnel and financial resources available to the project. More importantly, the Anacostia Project faced a difficulty often encountered in urban decentralization attempts — there was an ambiguous division of responsibility among the groups involved. In this case, the basic concept was vague. This led to unclear roles for the local school boards, the area-wide board, and the staffs of the D.C. school district and the U.S. Office of Education.

Funding Problems

As parents in communities throughout Washington grew more active in schools, a new political phenomenon began to emerge. With the new sophistication which came from increased participation, many parents grew aware of the inequities in funding the city's individual schools. Their demands shifted toward the issue of equalizing educational expenditures. This new emphasis has ironically lessened the appeal of decentralization. Parents realize that in order to equalize funding among schools throughout the city, a strong central authority is necessary to implement the fiscal overhaul.

New Decentralization Plans

Though the political focus in Washington schools has shifted to the equality of educational opportunity, decentralization and greater community participation still have wide appeal among parents. The new Superintendent of Schools, Barbara Sizemore, sees decentralization as a way to revitalize the educational system by creating smaller, more manageable units. During the school year 1974-75 the District plans for an interim decentralization into six regions. The final pluns call for developing 12 regions, each with a student population between 20,000 and 30,000 and a local governing board of community residents. The district has set aside the coming school year for planning the implementation of this political decentralization for the following school year.

Washington, D.C. is a good example of how citizen interest in urban schools has shifted in focus during the past decade. From intense efforts at desegregation, to demands for community control, to lobbying for equal educational opportunity, parents and other citizens have grown sophisticated and determined in their positions. As the District prepares this year for its system-wide experiment in political decentralization, the citizens' role will become even greater.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Detroit has had a long history of labor and racial hostility associated with the dominating presence of the auto industry. From these conflicts, there has emerged a strong sense of neighborhood and ethnic solidarity throughout the city. By 1970, 43% of the population was Black, and whites were migrating to the suburban ring. In education, a strong coalition of liberals, labor and Blacks pushed for a centrally directed program of integration throughout the 1960's. This coalition held control of the school board during most of the decade. After the riots of 1967, however, the "white flight", to the private schools, (especially Catholic schools) and to the suburbs grew intense. Among Blacks the sentiment for community control of schools grew strong.

State Decentralization Plans

At the same time that interest in community control of schools developed within the Black community, several decentralization bills appeared in the State legislature at Lansing. On August 11, 1969, Public Act 244 was signed into law. It called for dividing the Detroit Public School District into seven to eleven regions — each with a population of between 25,000 and 50,000 students. Each region was to have its own 9-member school board which would elect one member to serve on a central district-wide Board of Education. The powers of the regional boards with respect to curriculum, budget and personnel were subject to guidelines to be developed by the central board. Collective bargaining remained a central board function, and personnel rights of transfer, tenure and seniority were all protected.

The law did not create a system of complete community control. On issues of policy the local boards were subject to guidelines from the central school board. The decentralization bill passed both houses of the Legislature during the summer of 1969. Almost no debate took place — principally because most Detroit educational organizations were unaware of the political stakes involved.

Black and White Reaction

The political effects of the new law grew immediately apparent with the issue of drawing regional boundaries. Specifically, though Blacks comprised 65% of the school enrollment, they made up only 44% of the total city population. This meant that the more the regions became integrated, the

more likely it would be that whites would win the regional school board elections. The plan for regional boundaries which the Board of Education supported called for strong integration within each region. Black groups opposed the plan, arguing that whites would be elected and would then control an essentially Black school district.

White parents were even more opposed to the proposed regions — for a different reason. In order to implement the regional plan proposed by the Board of Education, widespread busing was required. For the first time, the school districts called for busing white students into a predominantly Black neighborhoods. White opposition to the Board's plan was immediate and strong. A white ad hoc group, the Citizens' Committee for Better Education (CCBE), was organized to fight the busing plan.

In this climate of political controversy, Detroit citizens lobbied heavily in the State legislature. Though bills were introduced for the postponement and even the repeal of the original decentralization law, debate arose within the legislative body, and no decisions could be reached. This delay contributed even more to the rising polarization among citizens in Detroit. The issues of decentralization and busing had been inextricably bound together. As opposition to busing grew, the Citizens' Committee for Better Education launched a massive campaign to recall the Board of Education's members who supported integration. The Black community was divided; while many integrationists supported the Board plan, separationist groups disapproved. They wanted regions to be drawn which would provide Black control of Black schools.

Public Act 48

All of this debate culminated when the Michigan legislature replaced the original decentralization law, Act 244, with a new law, Public Act 48. This legislative change was seen as a victory for the organized white neighborhoods.

According to the provisions of the new law, the Detroit school system was to be divided into eight regional districts of approximately 36,000 students each. The regional boundaries were to be drawn up by a special commission appointed by the Michigan governor. The decentralization would be political, for each region would elect a five-member policy-making board. The central Board of Education was to be made up of the highest vote-getter in each region, along with five additional members elected at large.

The responsibilities of the regional boards in the areas of personnel, curriculum and budget were to be spelled out in guidelines set by the central board. Contract negotiations, capital outlays, property management and purchasing were all areas of responsibility to be retained by the central board. In the area of personnel, specifically, the central board would establish pools of qualified candidates and would approve and enforce collective bargaining agreements. The regional boards would select and promote teachers and administrators from the list of qualified candidates; regional boards would also make recommendations for personnel dismissal, though final responsibility for dismissal would remain with the central board.

The central board of Detroit would establish educational goals, decide special education issues and would set high school graduation requirements. All other determination of curriculum was left to regional boards. On budgetary matters, a committee representing both the central and regional boards would recommend how to allocate funds to the city's eight regions. It was the responsibility of the central board, however, to make the final decision.

Regional boards were given wide discretion on spending the money allocated to them. In all of these policy areas, however, the fact that the central board sets guidelines for regional board authority means that in the end all real authority is limited centrally.

Regional Board Elections

Prior to the 1970 election of regional board members, a recall election of Board of Education members signaled a new direction in Detroit school politics. A particularly high turn-out in the white neighborhoods resulted in 60% of the voters favoring recall of the Board's integrationist majority. This election broke the tradition of the liberal-labor-Black coalition's control of school policies.

In November, 1970, regional boards were elected for the first time in Detroit's educational history. Both the momentum of the recall campaign and the organizational machinery of the Citizens' Committee for Better Education paid off for the white anti-busing movement. In five of the total eight regions, the Citizens' Committee for Better Education candidate received the highest number of votes and, thus, a seat on the central as well as the regional board. In short, the white-dominated Citizens' Committee for Better

Education had effectively gained political control of a Black dominated school district. Of the 40 regional board positions, only 14 were won by Blacks. Though two out of three children in the Detroit public schools are Black, their education is now determined by a white central board and by white-dominated regional boards.

A major lesson from the Detroit experience is that there must be citizen interest and citizen debate around decentralization from the very beginning. What happened in Detroit was that the political issues of implementing State-initiated decentralization led to a public referendum on busing. With the Black community split between separationists and integrationists, neighborhood whites (through ad hoc groups and an organized recall campaign) were able to capture control of the new decentralization structure. In no city have the issues of integration and decentralization been as inseparable as in the case of Detroit. Welham Grant, education editor of the Detroit Free Press, summed up the lessons to be learned from this political history:

> "The national importance of Detroit's experience with decentralization lies in the conflict which developed between decentralization and integration ... in Detroit the process of decentralization produced severe racial polarization and a backlash vote which put a conservative school board in office. The Blacks who pressed for decentralization were the losers; they ended up with less power and less influence than they had before decentralization ... the 'peace of reconciliation' that Alan Altshuler envisions as the ideal outcome of decentralization has yet to descend upon Detroit."

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

The history of school decentralization in New York City has received great national attention and study. So much has been written about the local boards, the teachers' strike of 1968, and the peripheral issues of New York decentralization that a brief overview might seem superficial. Nevertheless, all cities considering decentralization can learn from the New York experience, and hopefully they can avoid some of the tragic divisiveness that surrounded the issues.

In many ways, the unique features of the New York school system are due to its enormous size. The city-wide district has a total enrollment of 1,100,000 students and a budget greater than $1.5 billion. Its teachers organization, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), is the largest union local in the world.

Beginning at the turn of the century, personnel practices in the New York City school system were administered centrally. All teachers and administrators had to pass the qualifying test of the New York City Board of Examiners. Those who passed were ranked on a central eligibility list and were then assigned employment positions in order of their rank. These strict personnel procedures barred significant changes in the school for years. The system virtually excluded Black and Hispanic applicants from teaching or administrative positions. By 1967 only 11% of the teachers and less than 2% of the New York City Public School administrators were either Black or Hispanic. In sum, the central policies of an examination system, as well as tenure rules, and union contracts became structural barriers to minority involvement in massive school change.

New York's experiments with political decentralization began with Black and Puerto Rican parents and community groups challenging the school bureaucracy throughout the 1960's. Parents made their frustrations felt through protest tactics which included demonstrations, boycotts and sit-ins. In 1965, the Board of Education placed all schools under the authority of area district administrators, thereby beginning administrative decentralization. However, although local advisory boards were established, they were given no binding authority.

The Experimental Districts

The Board's first attempt at real political decentralization was to create three experimental districts — I.S. 201 in East Harlem, Two Bridges in Manhattan, and Ocean Hill-Brownsville in Brooklyn. As plans for local boards for these schools developed, so did the ferment for complete community control. At each school, an elected district governing board chose a project administrator for its area. These boards were also to have decision-making power over personnel, budget and curriculum. Negotiations between the three local boards and the central board regarding their formalized relationship resulted in the city school district approving the experimental districts' plans only in principle. The fact that the three districts had no formal charter meant that their legal authority was in jeopardy from the start.

Because their first priority was new personnel to administer the curricular experiments of the new districts, the actions of the local governing boards presented an immediate threat to the established school bureaucracy. Some have argued that the bureaucracy was so threatened by the first

examples of community decision-making that it deliberately tried to sabotage the projects. In any event, the three districts were successful in recruiting new people to educational decision-making. Over 85% of those who sat on the district governing boards were local public school parents.

The Bundy Report

During this same time the city was also considering system-wide decentralization of the schools. In 1967 the State legislature directed Mayor Lindsay to study ways to obtain greater community participation in educational policy-making. McGeorge Bundy, then the head of the Ford Foundation, headed a six-member panel to study the possible decentralization of the New York school system. The Bundy Report recommended dividing the district into thirty to sixty largely autonomous districts with their own local school boards. A central board and a central education agency would be retained with greatly reduced powers.

There was mixed reaction to the Bundy Report throughout the city. The Council of Supervisors' Association (CSA) and the UFT campaigned strongly against the Report's recommendations becoming State legislation. The debate broke out. A total of six major decentralization proposals were sent to the State legislature for consideration. These included plans submitted by Bundy, Lindsay, the State Board of Regents, and by the teacher and administrator organizations. A long, intense lobbying effort during the 1968 legislative session brought no decision; the issue of New York school decentralization was put off to the 1969 session in Albany.

Dispute, Strike and the New Law

During the spring of 1968 a dispute developed when a governing board of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Experimental District attempted to transfer 19 teachers out of the district. This issue led to the now famous New York City teachers' strike in the fall of 1968. Many issues emerged, but by the time a strike settlement was reached the issue of decentralization had become tied in with issues of race and class in New York. The strike resulted in a strong tension between Black and Jewish people throughout the city, and an emerging alliance between teachers and supervisors. This alliance, particularly between the two major organizations — the UFT and the CSA — campaigned strongly against school decentralization when bills were again argued in the 1969 session of the State legislature.

The New York Decentralization Law which finally emerged after intense and emotional lobbying, took effect on July 1, 1970. The bill created 31 local district boards but retained the central Board of Education. The three experimental districts were abolished. The Board of Examiners and tenure were preserved.

Districts in which students scored in the bottom 45% of a city-wide reading test were given greater flexibility in selecting teachers. In these districts teachers were not required to pass the New York City teachers examination. The local boards were also given power to choose their own textbooks from among those approved centrally, to initiate innovative programs and methods, and to authorize new courses. In the area of personnel, the local boards "may appoint, define duties, assign, promote and discharge employees". The central board allocates budgetary funds to the districts on the basis of prescribed formulas. The local boards may then decide how to spend the money they receive, except for the centrally administered funds covering transportation, lunches, repair and maintenance. The limits placed upon the powers of the local boards made the final law a disappointment to those who advocated total community control of the New York schools.

Boundaries and Local Board Elections

After passage of the bill the city had to plan district boundaries, develop operational guidelines for the local boards, and organize and conduct the community school board elections. After controversial hearings on the issue of boundary lines, the Board of Education adopted its old district lines established for earlier administrative decentralization. Several issues were raised by the law requiring direct elections for community school board membership. In large cities such as New York, many voters are often not parents or are those with children in non-public schools. Direct elections could result in parents of public school children being excluded from positions of power.

Despite the provision of money for voter registration and education, the electoral turn-out for the first community school board elections was low in many areas. Divisions had emerged among community control advocates who were disappointed with the decentralization law. Many urged a boycott of the elections. In addition, because the elections were based on proportional representation, those candidates supported by organizations had a great probablitiy of winning. The most active organizations in the community school board campaigns were the teachers' unions and the Catholic Church.

Those campaign efforts brought direct results. In a school system with an overwhelming minority group population, predominantly white local boards emerged. City-wide, in the first community school board elections, 72% of the seats were won by whites, 17% by Blacks, and 11% by Hispanics. The minority group boycotts, and the slates supported by parent, employee and religious groups were the major reasons for these results.

The New York Decentralization Experience

In general, the lessons to be learned from the New York decentralization experience are those which emerge from problems in the decentralization law itself. In the first place, though the city decentralized, it created districts which were still large units of approximately 20,000 students each. The boundary lines drawn split many minority group neighborhoods, thus preventing effective minority representation on the local boards. In many ways the community school boards lack substantial authority over personnel, budget and program. There is a poorly defined relationship between the local district boards and the central Board of Education. The ambiguous language of the law itself contributes to confusion over the powers of the district boards.

Thus, the first few years of decentralization have been spent in constant negotiation and litigation between the districts and the central board. In the 31 major court cases concerning power allocation within the system, the courts have generally granted powers to the community school boards where they are specifically indicated in the law. The courts have ruled residual power to remain with the central authority, especially in the issues involving due process of law.

The decentralization of the New York City Public Schools raised a fury and an interest unmatched in its intensity anywhere else in the country. Issues of power and political control were clear and visibly contested. Specific inferences and, perhaps, lessons for other cities can be made from this vivid experience.

In the first place a full redistribution of power will be strongly resisted by educational professionals, labor groups and many established political leaders. Secondly, effective decentralization depends upon an organized recruitment of local board members. This requires time, publicity, people and money. Third, the kinds of power delegated to local boards must be carefully

described. Fourth, new responsibilities and authority require retraining of all participants. Lastly, a precise relationship between local boards and the central Board of Education must be articulated. Hopefully, these lessons, more than the anguish and the ambiguous results of New York decentralization, will endure to guide other cities.

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

In 1968, there were close to 50,000 students in the Louisville public schools. Of these, about half were Black, and half were white. At that time Louisville had the second highest drop-out rate in the country. Seventy percent of the students scored below national norms on reading tests, and annual staff turnover was greater than 50% in some schools.

The Superintendent Initiates Decentralization

Beginning in July, 1969, the new Superintendent of Schools, Newman Walker, initiated attempts to completely overhaul the curriculum and governing structure of the schools. Open Board of Education meetings stimulated the beginnings of Louisville's Neighborhood School Boards (NSB's) as a way to ensure community input to decision-making and to the reform of the district. The feature which makes Louisville's system of political decentralization so unique, however, is that rather than setting up regional policy-making boards, the school district determined that each school could have its own board if it chose to do so. Thus, parents and community residents could have direct policy and decision-making power at the individual school site level. Nowhere else in the United States has political decentralization been carried to this extent.

Louisville's central school administration has set up a Department of Community Development to work with each school interested in setting up a school board. Either parents or the principal can initiate this process for a particular school. The only guidelines set by the Board of Education are those stipulating the local school board's composition. Specifically, parents at that school must compose the board's majority. There must be representatives from local community organizations, federal programs operating in the school, paraprofessionals, the lunchroom and custodial union, teacher organizations, the administration and student government.

Once the local school board has been established, it is free to develop its own organization plan, write its own by-laws, and define the nature and scope of its functions. The local school board then establishes policy through accepting or rejecting the principal's recommendations. Though there is no explicit mandate, nor definition of local power by the central board, the actions of the local boards are limited by three broad restrictions: (1) They may not violate any state or local statutes; (2) They may not violate any centrally negotiated agreement; and (3) They may not violate guidelines of federal programs operating in the school.

Louisville Public Schools Assembly

To minimize conflicts in the power relationship between the local school boards and the city Board of Education, the District has established a new representative structure, the Louisville Public Schools Assembly (LPSA). Each neighborhood school board (and any school without an established local board) sends a representative to this body. It functions as a forum for discussion of city-wide educational issues, and it makes recommendations to the central board on procedures and formulas for allocating District resources. One key point is that the chairman of the central board is also an LPSA member; this fact facilitates communication and lends credibility to the assembly's workings.

Any neighborhood school board which contests a central board decision may bring it on appeal to the LPSA. They, in turn, may recommend further central board consideration of the issue. The LPSA has also established eight committees to work with eight school departments in the central administration. Each school department prepares a "working paper" to define the role of the neighborhood school boards in its programs — be it in curriculum, maintenance, or personnel. The neighborhood school boards can then negotiate on any department's "working paper" statement of policy.

Several problems with the Louisville plan for full political decentralization must be faced in the future. Structurally, the LPSA may now serve only as a pressure buffer between the neighborhood school boards and the city Board of Education. The relationship between the LPSA and the central board remains unclear, and pressure to define roles will undoubtedly arise. On a broader level, the concept of local school boards in Louisville does not direct itself to the issue of integration. Louisville may be facing a court order to integrate its schools within the near future. How the district alters its decentralization structure to meet this demand will be an interesting case for other integrated districts to watch.

In any event, the Louisville public school system has committed itself to a full program of citizen participation in policy and decision-making. Louisville has come the furthest of any urban decentralization plan in providing parents and citizens real power to change educational policy in the communities where they live.

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE DECENTRALIZATION

We have attempted to outline the experiments in decentralization undertaken by seven large urban districts. Among these were examples of both administrative and political decentralization. For several reasons it is difficult to extricate generalities from the experiences of these cities and to formulate a prescription of "effective" decentralization. Too many variables come into play. Each urban school district is unique with respect to its size, its ethnic population, its history of citizen participation, and its structural relationship to the local city government. Each of these factors will influence the nature and ease of beginning decentralization.

Planning Necessities

There are, however, certain conditions which emerge as necessary for a smoother transition to a decentralized school system. In the first place, before developing the content of a decentralization plan, the district must consider who is involved in the planning process itself. It must decide what kind of staff assistance is available, and what the budget of the project will be. The Superintendent and the central board must support the idea of decentralization and be committed to work through the inevitable conflicts and crises. Time must be allowed to formulate several alternative plans, and to allow coalitions to emerge in support of them. The community must be involved in designing decentralization plans, and the district must be committed to ensure real representation of all ethnic and economic groups. Funds must be provided throughout this planning process.

Power Problems

It cannot be predicted how the planning and initiation of decentralization will emerge in any city. What is required, however, is an understanding by all that new power relationships are at stake, and that power conflicts are to be expected. Decentralization of power is often seen as a threat and will most likely be opposed by many professional educators. Given the static nature of bureaucracy, there may be organized lobbying efforts to preserve the status quo.

Integration and Participation

The issue of integration must be faced directly in the planning rather than in the implementation phase of decentralization. How will local school district boundaries be drawn and how will their student composition affect integration? How many districts should be created to ensure small manageable local units? How will district board elections be conducted? How can meaningful participation be stimulated?

Definition of Roles

Most importantly, the experience of other cities indicates the need for clearly defined roles, powers and responsibilities for all participating in decentralization. As people assume new positions of decision-making, there will be new personal and political relationships. Training in group process, for example, is required to facilitate this initial transition for both professionals and community representatives. A clearly written statement of roles and responsibilities is essential in avoiding later conflicts over power. To the degree that the new structure is ambiguous in intent and method, the potential for conflict is increased.

Perhaps the reason that decentralization has stirred so much debate is that its potential for change is so massive. Parents and teachers have grown aware that learning is difficult in a structure dominated by bureaucratic inefficiency. The educational needs of individual schools and children are often lost in shuffled papers and red tape. Policy decisions for these schools have been made by those most removed from the day-to-day educational climate. Decentralization of power — true political decentralization — represents an effort at returning school governance to the community most directly affected. Whether or not this responsibility and control belongs to the local population or the school professionals is still the heart of the political debate.

PART III: DECENTRALIZATION IN SAN FRANCISCO

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The San Francisco Unified School District is a large urban district which includes all the public schools within San Francisco's boundaries. It is composed of 102 elementary schools, 18 junior high schools, and 11 senior high schools. These schools currently teach 77,000 students at all levels of instruction.

In June, 1971, Judge Stanley Weigel of the United States District Court ordered that all San Francisco elementary schools be fully desegregrated by the following September. In March, 1973, the Board of Education adopted a resolution to implement full desegregation of all secondary schools by September, 1974. In March, 1974, after many unsuccessful attempts to adopt a secondary desegregation plan that satisfied diverse segments of the community as well as Board members, and other interested parties, the Board adopted "Operation Integrate." The plan underwent many modifications, but has still failed to achieve an ethnic balance (plus or minus 15% of any ethnic group) at the secondary level. This failure is partly due to the plan's "transfer policy". This policy permits students to transfer "to another school provided the racial balance is not adversely affected at either the sending or the receiving school". The District's Integration Office simply could not handle the hundreds of transfer requests submitted after the transfer policy was announced. Critics of the plan cite several further reasons for the plan's failure:

1. Students of secondary age are not as easily "shuffled about" as those of younger age. They can protest effectively.
2. Students of secondary age have been attending school with friends for years and would be unwilling to break off old ties by attending a new school.
3. The "transfer policy" adopted with the integration plan was seen as a direct action to pacify anti-busing forces in the District.
4. Citizen and parental input to the plan was minimized and treated as a token gesture by the District.

Along with the ongoing problems of both elementary and secondary desegregation, the District is under court order to provide expanded bilingual education classes (Lau v. Nichols decision), and reconstruction of all school sites to ensure earthquake-proofing. The concomitant fiscal responsibilities carried by these decisions will have a major effect on all District educational

programs in the years ahead. Other key issues facing the school district include a decreasing white student population, statewide changes in the allocation of state aid to school districts, the implementation of an improved district-wide reading program, a broadly-supported affirmative action policy, and the possibility of year-round schooling.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS AFFECTING THE SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

The California State Education Code, which delineates all general provisions for the establishment, maintenance, and governance of the public school systems in California specifically prohibits any board of education from abrogating its authority and powers. General Provision No. 921, Chapter 2, Article I of the Code states:

> "Every school district shall be under the control of a board of trustees or a board of education."
>
> (author's emphasis)

This provision, by definition, limits any school district in the state from undergoing full political decentralization as defined earlier in this study. The formation of "school-community advisory councils" at each school site within the district (as in Los Angeles) typifies the legal extent to which urban school decentralization can occur in California. In practice, however, a board of education dedicated to fully decentralizing school district services may, as a policy, adopt all recommendations made by a council or sub-district without legally anulling its policy-making powers. Thus, the strength and effect of decentralization is dependent upon the attitudes of a particular board. The Education Code also clearly provides that local control of school districts must be delineated by the laws (e.g. city charter) which govern a particular city. (Chapter 5, Article 1241)

In San Francisco, the factors affecting local control of the school district are outlined in the San Francisco City Charter, which contains guidelines for school governance, including teacher and administrator tenure provisions, selection of personnel, and major fiscal responsibilities. Many such provisions contained in the Charter are in dire need of updating. Article V, Section 5.101, for instance, gives all control for the disbursement of school district monies to the City Controller in City Hall. The District's purchasing and requisitioning of supplies also must be processed through City Hall departments before any action can be taken. For a teacher or a principal at a

school site, the school district-City Hall requisitioning process is particularly frustrating. It usually means weeks or months of waiting for the requested supplies. One principal became so disheartened in waiting for desk furniture he had ordered weeks previous, that he rented a truck, backed into the supply yard in the middle of the night, and stole the requested desks. The case is extreme, but it does point up a rather antiquated system. The political implications are staggering. In light of this, the politics of City Hall inordinately affect the fiscal administration of the District, whereas in other cities, this system is solely a school board responsibility.

Such a tedious process has prompted many school district personnel to clamor for a faster delivery of services. Superintendent Morena has explained that whatever plan for decentralization he finally formulates, the focus will be geared toward an accelerated, more responsive delivery system for all field personnel at the school sites. Throughout the interviews we conducted with members of the Board of Education and District-related personnel there was frequent mention of the need for increased site decision-making responsibilities, principally in the areas of budgeting and personnel selection. Cutting through the "bureaucratic red tape" at 135 Van Ness was a recurrent theme.

Decentralization might seem to be a simple process, until it is put in a political context — that is, reality. Factors such as full Board of Education support for decentralization, an administration receptive to change, and an informed and organized citizenry are the crucial elements needed to begin and carry through a decentralization plan in San Francisco. It must also be clearly understood that extremely powerful labor union pressures will be exerted against decentralization. Many officials and members of administrator and teachers' unions feel that decentralization will place them at the mercy of irrational citizen groups or tyrannical principals. Any decentralization program in San Francisco must deal honestly with these fears if the unions are not to become an immovable block to decentralization progress.

Such a block would be tragic at this particular point in San Francisco's history, when an increasingly polarized but sophisticated and vocal citizen community is demanding accountability and relevance in curriculum. Hindered by a City Charter which perpetuates bureaucratic inefficiency, the San Francisco Unified School District will have to seek out realistic and progressive alternatives to its present system of school administration.

THE RICHMOND AND PARK-SOUTH COMPLEXES: AN EARLY EXPERIMENT IN DECENTRALIZATION

Many San Francisco citizens feel that the city has already had an experiment in decentralization — the formation of the "complexes". The history of the complexes began in 1967, with a joint series of recommendations from the Stanford Research Institute and the Citizens' Advisory Committee (appointed by the San Francisco Board of Education). During 1968 and 1969, the Citizens' Advisory Committee suggested the formation of two experimental mini-districts, one in the Park South area, and the other in the Richmond area. These mini-districts — or "complexes" — were supposed to work toward developing local parent-teacher-administrator cooperation to facilitate desegregation rather than to establish "mini-boards" or similar replications of centralized institutions. During 1969 and 1970, the Board of Education appointed planning councils for each of the two complexes, and suggested that there might eventually be an administrator for each complex who would serve as a community-supported aid and resource to the principals of each complex area.

During 1970, the two complex councils began surveys and long-term plans, which resulted in the expression of needs for more funds, more personnel, and more power for local citizens. These statements, unfortunately, coincided with headline publicity about the New York City teachers' strike, which emphasized the extent to which local citizens might exercise irrational power over the public schools. The result was a city-wide debate over the role of local citizens who might be influential in school affairs. The debate culminated in a lawsuit claiming that the Board of Education had illegally abdicated its power and responsibilities in setting up the complex councils. The verdict which settled the suit was that the complex councils had to become elected, representative bodies in order to function legally.

As a result of this decision, elections were held to form councils for each complex. With this done, the Board of Education appointed an Administrator for each of the complexes, who would serve as an administrative liaison to the central office, and who would have the responsibility for evaluation of complex activities, as well as control over any foundation funds which might be granted to each complex.

During the five months occupied by the lawsuit and the appointment of Complex Administrators, however, the Board of Education decided that there were only enough funds available to support one of the two complexes. The council of the Park South complex then voted to have the Richmond complex receive district funding and thus become the official experimental district for the city. Park South, however, was given a small planning grant by the district, and received funds from two major foundations. With this funding, the Complex Administrator and council of Park South began to develop informal ways to build trust and cooperation between parents, teachers and administrators, and to experiment with inservice teacher training. This work is still progressing in 1974, and by the accounts of everyone involved, the results have been very positive. Administrators, parents and teachers seem to work with each other in an atmosphere of trust which is unusual for urban public schools.

The Richmond complex, after receiving official recognition by the Board, began functioning as a semi-self-contained educational and administrative unit, with an administrator and an elected council. During 1970-71, the complex worked toward building communication networks between individual schools, and between the schools and the local community. Transportation, staff and requisition problems were handled through the Complex Administrator's office, which resulted in more ease and flexibility of function than had been the case through the central office. Through cooperative planning on the part of teachers, parents and administrators, the Richmond complex developed a number of individualized programs, and initiated experiments in "open" classrooms, team teaching and flexible scheduling during its first year of operation.

The history of the complexes changed radically in the Fall of 1971. At that time, the District implemented a plan to desegregate and integrate San Francisco's elementary schools in response to an order by the federal courts. As the major part of this plan, the Citizens' Advisory Committee recommended to the Board that San Francisco be divided into seven zones to geographically facilitate the District's plans for busing school children. Both of the complexes were absorbed by this action: the Park South complex became Zone 7, and the Richmond complex became Zone 1. Our interviews with people who had been active in the work of the complexes indicate a predominant feeling that the zone system seriously weakened the organizational networks built up by the complexes. The new Zone

Administrators were appointed with little community input, and were given only vague responsibilities. Principals were no longer subordinate to the Zone Administrator, as they had been to the Complex Administrator. The end result seems to have been confusion, frustration, and a local distrust of the motives of the Board of Education and the Superintendent's office.

THE "MORENA PLAN" FOR DECENTRALIZATION

A new chapter was begun in the history of decentralization of the San Francisco schools when, on April 23, 1974, the San Francisco Examiner reported that Superintendent Steven Morena would present a decentralization plan to the Board of Education. The plan was to feature three or four mini-districts, each with its own superintendent, curriculum specialists, community advisory boards and site advisory boards. The mini-districts, however, would still be subordinate to the central district superintendent and the San Francisco Board of Education. Dr. Morena was quoted as suggesting that the local boards might eventually participate in the selection of teachers and administrators in each mini-district. Private foundations had been approached for planning funds and, if the money were to come, Morena said, "I think I could implement it by September 1975."

On May 6, Dr. Morena met with Zone Council and PTA representatives to discuss his decentralization plans. Then, on the May 14 meeting of the Board of Education, Dr. Morena introduced Resolution 45-14-Sp9, entitled "Administrative Reorganization of the District". The resolution stated that the proposed reorganization "...looks toward as many decisions as feasible, legal and proper to be made at the decentralized administrative unit or school level" with the retention of "...functions such as personnel, payroll, data processing, fiscal and others as centralized functions." The resolution also stated that "The Superintendent feels that each school must have a strong community organization fully representative of that school, including parents, administrators, community, teachers and students."

Dr. Morena's resolution specifically proposed that "...the Superintendent appoint a staff member as project director to oversee the planning and preparation of a written report detailing the administrative reorganization" and that "the Superintendent and Board appoint an Administrative Reorganization Committee to include parents, administrators, community, teachers, students, and members of the business and labor communities for the duration of the planning project to work with the District staff in the project." Preliminary reports were to be scheduled for November 1974 and February 1975. A final report was to be given by the end of April 1975, and the plan was to be implemented for the school year 1975-76.

On May 28, 1974, the Board of Education voted to schedule a special meeting on June 6 to consider five proposals submitted by Dr. Morena. Among these proposals was Resolution 45-14-Sp9, which was by this time specifically entitled "Proposal for Administrative Decentralization of the District". Before a vote was taken a number of speakers addressed the Board concerning the need for community control of the schools, and for a real Board committment to decentralization before establishing a study committee. In response, Commissioner Kidder moved that the resolution be amended to provide for implementation of decentralization by the beginning of the school year 1975-1976. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 4 to 3. The Board then voted to refer the entire Resolution 45-14-Sp9 back to the Superintendent for further study. Thus the first attempt to formally initiate decentralization through the San Francisco Board of Education was, at least temporarily, a failure.

The Service Center staff interviewed community representatives who had spoken against passage of Resolution 45-14-Sp9 at the School Board meeting. We also interviewed some of the members of the Board of Education who had been involved in voting on the resolution. The interviews reveal that people both spoke against, and voted against the decentralization resolution for the following reasons:

1. Zone Council activists and others expected Dr. Morena to have a concrete decentralization plan to present to the Board. Resolution 45-14-Sp9 was a great disappointment to these people. They felt it was a "nebulous, meaningless statement", and, if implemented, would simply divert attention and energy from the real problems of the zone councils.
2. Some community people thought that a "hidden agenda" involved in the decentralization resolution was the promotion of a few high ranking central office administrators. They felt the resolution would only add to an increasingly top-heavy bureaucracy.
3. Some Board members thought that it was completely unrealistic to put the Board on record as intending to implement an unknown decentralization plan by the 1975-76 school year.

In response to these objections, Dr. Morena states that he never intended to present a concrete decentralization plan. Instead, he merely wanted to initiate the machinery to get community input toward the eventual formulation of plans for decentralization. He specifically did not want to "just lay a plan" on the community.

Many of the people who were in favor of the resolution feel that it was defeated because members of the Board of Education were afraid that "decentralization" really meant "giving the Board's power to community people". Others felt that the defeat reflected pressure from labor groups — and the lobbying of zone council leaders who interpreted the decentralization resolution as a threat to their existence.

Whatever the validity for these suppositions about the shelving of Resolution 45-14-Sp9, it is now being rewritten by Dr. Morena, and will probably be resubmitted to the Board of Education soon after this report is published.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Service Center staff hopes that both the Education for the People Program and the Riles Commission will place adequate emphasis on realistically decentralizing the San Francisco Unified School District beyond a mere geographical relocation of central office administrators. We trust that this report will assist in their efforts.

In sum, the San Francisco Service Center recommends the following:

1. The District should encourage input concerning decentralization from the total school community, including ethnic groups, labor groups, students, PTA, teachers, administrators, and the Board.
2. An objective monitoring agency (i.e. a university or private research organization) should be retained by the District to assess the ongoing progress and problems of the decentralization effort.
3. The effects of decentralization on District finances and integration plans must be studied carefully.
4. All roles in the decentralization process must be clearly defined.
5. An evaluation system concentrating on student behavior and achievement, and teacher and administrator performance should be developed before implementation of decentralization.
6. Inservice training relating to new roles concomitant with decentralization should be provided for all District staff and lay personnel in light of the Louisville model.
7. At least a three-year mandate is needed for planning, implementing and evaluating decentralization, with an allocation of funds for the entire period.

8. All finances and transactions in the decentralization effort must be made public as well as clear. Real public relations efforts are essential to make any decentralization plan a success.
9. The Board and the Superintendent's Office must be fully committed to any decentralization plan.
10. Citizens should pay particular attention to the voting histories of Board members to assess their positions on decentralization, as well as maintain a critical eye on any recommendations made by the Superintendent and the administrative staff. The citizenry should not have to waste their energies on any "paper tiger" plans that profess citizen involvement.

INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

San Francisco Unified School District

Dr. Steven Morena, Superintendent, San Francisco Unified School District
Dr. Mary Byrd, Director, Elementary Education
Mr. Duncan Hodel, Principal, Clarendon Elementary School
Dr. Frederick Kennedy, Associate Superintendent, Personnel Services

Board Members

Ms. Lucille Abrahamson
Dr. Eugene Hopp
Father Thomas Reed

PTA

Ms. Pegge Lacey, President
San Francisco PTA

Labor

Mr. James Ballard, President Local 61, American Federation of Teachers
Dr. James Kramer, San Francisco Classroom Teachers Association

Others

Ms. Nicki Salan, Zone 7 Parent-Activist
Ms. Kathy Schuler, Zone 1 Parent-Activist
Dr. Bud Taylor, Orinda Public Schools
Mr. Tom Griffin, Chief Legal Counsel, State Department of Education, Sacramento

The Service Center wishes to thank the staff of the Science and Government Documents Division of the Main Branch of the San Francisco Public Library for their assistance and cooperation in this project.

APPENDIX A: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Listed below are the addresses of those school districts whose decentralization programs were described in the text. In each case, the name of a contact person, the address, and the telephone number of the district is included. We have also listed under each city the names of major documents which were provided by the district for this research. There was no charge for any of the information we received.

SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

Write to: Office of the Superintendent
St. Louis, Public Schools
911 Locust Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63101

Phone: (314) 231-3720

Materials available:

* Organizational Chart of the administration
* Memo from the Office of the Superintendent: St. Louis Public Schools Reorganization Plan (June 9, 1970)
* Memo from the Office of the Superintendent: Recommendation for Greater Local Participation in the Total Operation of the St. Louis Public Schools (January 14, 1969)

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Write to: Edmund B. Adams
Administrative Coordinator
Staff Development Branch
Los Angeles City Unified School District
450 North Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90012

Phone: (213) 687-4375

Materials available:

* Organization Chart of the administration
* Decentralization...One Year Later (Prepared by the Decentralization Task Force, May 1972)
* Decentralization 1973: A Second Year Progress Report (Prepared by the Decentralization Task Force, October 1973)
* School Community Advisory Council Handbook (Revised edition, Fall 1973)
* Class Description: Area Superintendent (Personnel Division)

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Write to: Kenneth W. Haskins
Vice-Superintendent of Schools
Public Schools of the District of Columbia
Presidential Building
415 - 12th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Phone: (202) 347-9191

Materials available:

* Decentralization (Published by D.C. Public Schools, April 1974)

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Write to: Lucille Quamby
Coordinator, Department of Information Service
Room 1102
Detroit Public Schools Center
5057 Woodward Street
Detroit, Michigan 48202

Phone: (313) 494-1010

Materials available:

* Detroit's Schools Make History with Decentralization (Oct. 1970)
* Guidelines for Regional and Central Boards of Education of the School Districts of the City of Detroit (Oct. 26, 1970)

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

Write to: New York City Public Schools
110 Livingston Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Also write to: Corinne Willing
Information Director
Public Education Association
20 West 40th Street
New York, New York 10018

Phone: (212) 354-6100

Materials available:

* The Case for Community Control (By David S. Seeley)
* New York's School Decentralization Law: Two and One Half Years Later (By Michael Rebell)
* A Summary of the 1969 School Decentralization Law for New York City

Also write to: Naomi Spatz
Assistant Director of Public Relations
United Federation of Teachers
Local 2, American Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO
260 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10010

Phone: (212) 777-7500

Materials available:

* Decentralization and the City Schools (By Sandra Fellman)
* School Decentralization: Problems and Paradoxes (By Bernard Bard)
* The Real Meaning of the New York City Teachers' Strike (By Albert Shanker)

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Write to: Dr. James M. Coleman, Chairman
Department of Community Development
Louisville Public Schools
Fourth at Broadway
Louisville, Kentucky 40202

Phone: (502) 585-2231

Materials available:

* Concept Paper for Decentralization (Department of Community Development and Human Relations)
* Daybreak (Issues: June 1972, January 1974)
* "Reform Without Politics in Louisville," Saturday Review (February 5, 1972)
* "How Louisville Put It All Together," American Education, (December, 1971)
* "The Lessons of Louisville," Phi Delta Kappan, (April 1973)

APPENDIX B: ADMINISTRATIVE DECENTRALIZATION IN FIVE ADDITIONAL CITIES

(Sources of Information and Brief Description of Decentralization Structure)

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Write to: Harlan Anderson
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
Minneapolis Public Schools
807 N.E. Broadway
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413

Phone: (612) 348-6084

Information:

—Administrative decentralization plan implemented, 1973.
—Three areas headed by Area Superintendents.
—Curriculum generalists also in the field.
—Central functions include personnel, facilities, maintenance, transportation, finance, and budgeting.
—Research department to evaluate decentralization in Fall, 1974.
—Organizational chart and district map available.

CINCINNATI, OHIO

Write to: Robert P. Curry
Cincinnati Public Schools — Education Center
230 East Ninth Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Phone: (513) 621-7010

Information:

—Organizational chart indicates decentralization to date.
—Under the Department of Curriculum and Instruction six Area Directors each have instructional consultants.
—Four elementary areas; two secondary areas.
—All other support services located in the central administration.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Write to: Marjorie Henders
Publications and Public Information
Oakland Unified School District
1025 Second Avenue
Oakland, California 94606

Phone: (415) 836-2622

Information:

—Three administrative K-12 regions each with approximately thirty schools and 22,000 students.
—Each region headed by an Associate Superintendent.
—Regional concept recommended by management consultant report from the firm of Price, Waterhouse, and Co.
—"It is important to note that these regions are to be administrative rather than political entities."
—Materials available:
* Plan for Creation of Administrative Regions (Superintendent's Memo to the Board of Education, Dec. 15, 1970)
* Superintendent's Bulletin (January 18, 1971)

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Write to: Susan Stier
Specialist, Research/Management Information Studies
Seattle Public Schools
915 Fourth Avenue North
Seattle, Washington 98109

Phone: (206) 587-5050

Information:

—Administrative decentralization plan adopted in 1970.
—Major administrative organizational changes since then.
—Two regions each headed by Deputy Superintendents.
—All regions under Associate Superintendent for Instruction.
—Regions include elementary and secondary schools.
—Organizational chart available.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Write to: James G. Moffat
Assistant Superintendent, Government Funded Programs
Board of Education — City of Chicago
228 North La Salle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Phone: (312) 641-4500

Information:

—Administrative decentralization as a result of recommendations of the management firm of Booz, Allen, and Hamilton, Inc., 1967.

—"The administration of the school system is by direct line of authority from principal to district superintendent, to area associate superintendent, to deputy superintendent, to general superintendent."

—General superintendent as chief administrative officer with emphasis on planning, developing and evaluating programs.

—Deputy superintendent as chief operational officer for day-to-day management.

—Three areas headed by Associate Superintendents with full staffs, including district superintendents.

—Only staff activities which are system-wide in nature are handled at district headquarters.

—Citizen participation through local and district advisory councils and Board of Education committee structure.

—Materials available:

* Organization Survey (By Booz, Allen and Hamilton, Inc., May, 1967)
* Plans to Reorganize the Chicago Public Schools into Three Administrative Areas (August, 1967)
* Report on Administrative Organization, Major Staff Responsibilities and Functional Relationships of the Chicago Public Schools, (March, 1974)

SUGGESTED READING LIST

Books:

Altshuler, Alan, Community Control of Schools: The Black Demand for Participation in Large American Cities. New York: Pegasis Books, 1970

Cronin, Joseph M., The Control of Urban Schools. New York: Free Press, 1973

Fantini, Marie D.; Gittell, Marilyn; and Magat, Richard, Community Control and the Urban School. New York: Praeger, 1971

Fantini, Maria D. and Gittell, Marilyn, Decentralization: Achieving Reform. New York: Praeger, 1973

Hummel, R.C. and Nagle, J.M., Urban Education in America: Problems and Prospects. New York: Oxford Unviersity Press, 1973

La Noue, George and Smith, Bruce, The Politics of School Decentralization. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1973

Levin, Henry (Ed.), Community Control of Schools. Washington, D.C.: The Brodings Institute, 1970

McKelvey, Troy (Ed.), Metropolitan School Organization: Vol. I, Basic Problems and Patterns; Vol. II, Proposals for Reform. McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1973

Zimet, Melvin, Decentralization and School Effectiveness: A Case Study of the 1969 Decentralization Law in New York City. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1973

Articles:

"Curriculum Essays on Citizens, Politics and Administration in Urban Neighborhoods," Special Issue, Public Administration Review, October, 1973

Final Report to the Legislature by the Joint Committee on Reorganization of Large Urban Unified School Districts, January, 1971. (From the office of State Senator John Harmer)

Ornstein, Allan, "Administrative/Community Organization of Metropolitan Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, June, 1973

Rebell, Michael, "New York's Decentralization Law: Two and a Half Years Later." Journal of Law and Education. January, 1973. p. 1-39

Featherstone, Richard and Hill, Frederick, American School and University, Five Part Series:

Part I: "The Bundy Report — What It Really Means." 41:44-48, October, 1968

Part II: "Centralization vs. Decentralization: Pros and Cons," 41:56-59, December, 1968

Part III: "The Questions That Need To Be Answered if Decentralization Is To Succeed." 4:30-32, February, 1969

Part IV: "Two Models for Decentralizing Districts." 41:46-48, April, 1969

Part V: "Model Three and Future Possibilities." 42:62-66, September, 1969.